

-22-

**A SYSTEM FOR CHARACTERIZING PERFORMANCE OF DATA HANDLING**  
**SYSTEMS UNDER PARTICULAR STIMULI**

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**Abstract of the Disclosure**

A system and method for characterizing performance of a data handling system, such as a disc drive or computer network, is disclosed. The system includes a host computer for issuing commands for data blocks that are large enough to neutralize caching schemes that may otherwise mask the worst-case performance of the data handling system. Block service times for the commands are recorded and are compared to a maximum allowable service time threshold. This comparison is then used to generate a performance score for the data handling system. Other parameters may also be factored into the performance score such as the frequency and size of data quality errors.

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